

UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITY
FFY 2019 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Competitive Grants Program
Request for Responses to be issued on or about April 2, 2018
One Pre-RFR meeting will be held

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act of 1987 established a national program to control nonpoint sources (NPS) of pollution. Each year the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection issues a Request for Responses (RFR) for competitive projects to be funded through Section 319 grants. This year's RFR is anticipated to be issued on or about April 2, 2018. Proposals will be due on or about June 1, 2018. The RFR will be announced via COMMBUYS, the Commonwealth's procurement site. The RFR will be posted at the MassDEP website, <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/grants/watersheds-water-quality.html#2>.

One Pre-RFR meeting **will be held at MassDEP's Central Regional Office, 8 New Bond Street, Worcester, MA.**

Directions to CERO: <http://mass.gov/dep/about/region/centralr.htm>

March 6, 2018, 10:00 am - noon, SuAsCo Room (snow date will be March 13, 2018)

The purpose of the meeting is to review project requirements and eligibilities and to discuss program guidelines, grant requirements, and FFY 2019 program priorities. Any other aspect of the program may also be discussed. Under state procurement regulations, Department and other EEA staff will not be able to discuss projects with proponents once the RFR is issued. Therefore, potential applicants are urged to take advantage of the pre-RFR meeting, and all other opportunities to engage 319 program staff in discussion about how to develop eligible, competitive projects, prior to the April RFR issuance. All attendees will be given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss potential projects.

Potential applicants are encouraged, but are not required, to attend. If you cannot attend, but would like to learn more about the program or discuss a potential project, please contact program staff listed below.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Responses to the RFR may be submitted by any Massachusetts public or private organization. Projects from all basins are eligible and encouraged, excluding work covered under NPDES and MS4 stormwater permits. Projects should be of manageable size, but should strive to be comprehensive projects addressing all major identified nonpoint sources affecting water quality in the watershed or subwatershed. All 319 projects are required to provide quarterly reporting as well as a Final Report. A 40% non-federal match is required.

FFY 2019 Project Types for 319 funding

The bulk of 319 funds are directed to Implementation Projects. A smaller but still substantial pool of funding is also available for projects of other types.

- 1. Implementation Projects in Impaired Waters.** The most competitive applicants will propose a watershed-based strategy to implement a combination of structural and non-structural BMPs addressing all impairments and leading to restoration of impaired waters (Impaired waters are those that do not meet water quality standards as per the 2014 Section 303(d) list and can be found here: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/resources/07v5/14list2.pdf>). BMPs should be selected for optimal pollutant load removal, emphasizing source reduction. Proposed BMPs must be developed at least to the conceptual design stage and submitted with the proposal. Proposals must contain site specific information to demonstrate that the project is feasible and ready to be constructed within the project timeline. A Watershed-Based Plan will be required to be developed as part of each Implementation project. (please note watershed-based plans can be developed with a new online tool that can greatly reduce time and complexity involved: <http://prj.geosyntec.com/MassDEPWBP>)
- 2. Healthy Watersheds and Protection of High-Quality Waters.** Implementation projects for climate change adaptation and resiliency and projects that protect non-impaired and high quality waters from the effects of nonpoint source pollution are eligible for 319 program funds. This may include funding and support for a project with a substantial land conservation component as part of NPS prevention and remediation work. These proposals must be supported with documentation of the problem, conceptual or better plans to explain the strategy and approach, and all other information necessary to

demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed project. For a definition of and more information on healthy watersheds please visit <https://www.epa.gov/hwp/healthy-watersheds-overview>.

- 3. Outreach and Education.** Outreach and education is often recommended as an effective nonstructural BMP. Successful projects in this category will propose specific outreach and education activities and products, and will develop and implement an evaluation method to gauge the effectiveness of these activities. Projects should have regional or statewide relevance and should include a deliverable that can be made available in both print and electronic form, ensuring accessibility for disabled and non-English-speaking audiences if appropriate.
- 4. Development of Municipal and Regional Stormwater Collaboratives and Funding Mechanisms.** A stormwater utility is a property assessment tool that provides a sustainable source of funding to construct, maintain, and repair stormwater infrastructure. Proposals may include initial research to see whether a stormwater utility is appropriate for a Town, quantifying the current and future cost of stormwater management programs, development and distribution of educational materials, and development of regional agreements and funding structures.

NPDES Stormwater regulated/MS4 areas:

- **Implementation projects remain eligible for funding in NPDES regulated areas** (Town by town maps of regulated areas are found here: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/regulated-ms4-massachusetts-communities>). The work must be completed by the end of the 319 contract (estimated June 30, 2021) and before it is required by the NPDES Stormwater Management Plan. 319 funds cannot be used for work that addresses NPDES permit requirements. **These projects will receive priority points in 2019.**
- All other types of projects are eligible in regulated or mixed regulated/unregulated areas, provided the work proposed is not required under the current or pending NPDES stormwater permit.

Program guidelines emphasize the importance of speedy, efficient expenditure of grant funds. Successful applicants must be diligent about adhering to project milestones and timely completion of tasks and deliverables. Funds may be withdrawn from projects that are not expeditiously implemented, and will be redirected to other projects that are ready to move forward.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The RFR contains a schedule for each step of the application process. Applications must meet the eligibility requirements and follow the specific format outlined in the RFR. Applications are reviewed and recommended by a screening committee comprised of MassDEP, EEA, and EPA staff. Once approved by the Commonwealth, the list of recommended projects is submitted to EPA. Following EPA approval, the Department begins contract negotiations with the proponents of the funded projects. As a general rule, 319 grantees can expect funds will become available six to ten months after submitting the initial grant application. Funds are paid on a reimbursement basis, and the Department retains 10% of the award amount until the project is finalized. From fiscal year 1990 through 2018, 319 grant awards have ranged from \$10,000 up to \$500,000.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criteria will be specified in the RFR. Evaluation of implementation projects will substantially favor work that will result in meeting water quality standards and/or restoring beneficial uses (i.e., in removal of the waterbody from Category 5 of the Final Massachusetts 2014 Integrated List of Waters, <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/water/resources/07v5/14list2.pdf>).

Directions to CERO: <http://mass.gov/dep/about/region/centralr.htm>

To obtain additional program information, summaries of past 319 projects, or a copy of the 319 RFR, see <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/grants/watersheds-water-quality.html> or contact Malcolm Harper, 319 Nonpoint Source Program Coordinator at 508-767-2795, Malcolm.Harper@state.ma.us. Hard copies of the RFR will be mailed only if requested.